DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 853 PS 009 754

AUTHOR Grossman, Allyson Sherman
TITLE Children of Working Mothers, March 1976. Special Labor Force Report 205.
INSTITUTION Bureau of Labor Statistics (DOL), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Mar 76
NOTE 8p.; Tables may be marginally legible due to quality of print in document
JOURNAL CIT Monthly Labor Review; p41-44 June 1977

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Day Care Services; Demography; *Employment Statistics; Ethnic Groups; Family Characteristics; Family Income; Fatherless Family; *Mothers; Racial Characteristics; Socioeconomic Influences; *Statistical Surveys; Tables (Data); *Trend Analysis; *Working Parents; *Working Women

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a survey of the number of mothers with children under age 17 who were in the work force in 1976. The paper surveys various factors which influence these statistics: age of children, socioeconomic factors, ethnic and racial characteristics, family size, family income and the availability of child care services. The statistics for 1976 are compared to data from previous years. Tables are provided to illustrate the statistics presented in the paper. (BD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ren of Working Mothers, h 1976

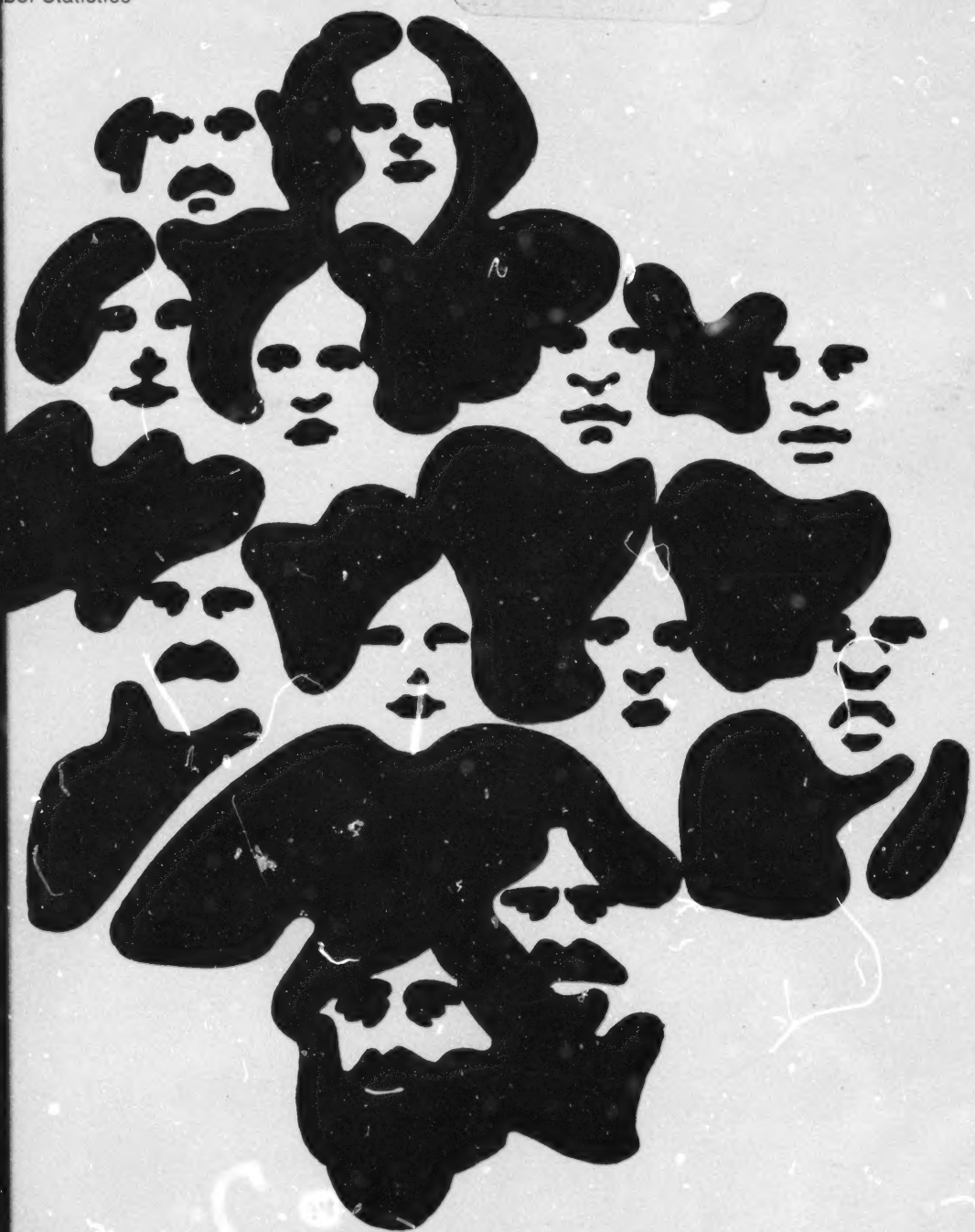
PS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

205

nent of Labor
bor Statistics



Unless identified as copyrighted, articles and tabulations in this publication are in the public domain and may be reproduced without permission of the Federal Government. Please credit the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Following is a list of Special Labor Force Reports which have been published since September 1976. Copies may be obtained, while the supply lasts, upon request to the Bureau of Labor Statistics or to any of its regional offices.

Number	
158	Young Workers: In School and Out
159	Going Back to School at 35
160	Education of Workers: Projections to 1990
161	Educational Attainment of Workers, March 1973
162	Work Experience of the Population in March 1972
163	Employment and Unemployment in 1973
164	Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force in March 1973
165	Children of Working Mothers, March 1973
166	Multiple Jobholding, May 1973
167	Job Situation of Vietnam-era Veterans
168	Employment of High School Graduates and Dropouts, 1973
169	Employment of Recent College Graduates, October 1972
170	Employment of School-Age Youth, October 1973
171	Work Experience of the Population, 1973
172	Job Tenure of Workers, January 1973
173	Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force, March 1974
174	Children of Working Mothers, March 1974
175	Educational Attainment of Workers, March 1974
176	Occupational Mobility of Workers
177	Multiple Jobholding in May 1974
178	Employment and Unemployment in 1974
179	Trends in Overtime Hours and Pay, 1969-74
180	Students, Graduates, and Dropouts in the Labor Market, October 1974
181	Work Experience of the Population, 1974
182	Multiple Jobholders in May 1975
183	Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force, March 1975
184	Going Back to School at 35 and Over
185	Employment and Unemployment During 1975
186	Educational Attainment of Workers, March 1975
187	Length of Working Life for Men and Women, 1970
188	Long Workweeks and Premium Pay
189	Families and the Rise of Working Wives--An Overview
190	Women Who Head Families: A Socioeconomic Analysis
191	Students, Graduates, and Dropouts in the Labor Market, October 1975
192	Work Experience of the Population, 1975
193	Educational Attainment of Workers, March 1976
194	Multiple Jobholders, May 1976
195	Weekly and Hourly Earnings Data from the Current Population Survey
196	Long Hours and Premium Pay, May 1976
197	New Labor Force Projections to 1990
198	The Labor Force Patterns of Divorced and Separated Women
199	Employment and Unemployment in 1976
200	Students, Graduates, and Dropout in the Market, October 1976
201	Work Experience of the Population in 1976
202	The Extent of Job Search by Employed Workers
203	Year-Round Full-Time Earnings in 1975
204	Going Back to School at 35 and over

Children of Working Mothers, March 1976

Almost half of all children have mothers in the labor force

ALLYSON SHERMAN GROSSMAN

The proportion of children whose mothers are in the labor force has grown steadily since 1970, increasing, on average, more than one percentage point per year. In March 1976, nearly 46 percent of the children under age 18 had mothers in the work force, up from 44 percent in March 1975 and 39 percent in March 1970. Among preschool-age children, the proportion whose mothers work or look for work has also increased, rising from 29 to 37 percent during the 6-year period.[1]

As a result of the particularly sharp drop in the birth rate since 1970, the number of children in families has declined by 6 percent to 61.7 million (table 1). At the same time, the number of children with working mothers has risen by 10 percent to 28.2 million, reflecting, in part, the steady, long-term increase in the labor force participation rate of married women with young children. The growing incidence of marital disruption also has been important, because divorced mothers have higher labor force participation rates than other women with children.

The increase in divorce and separation has had a significant impact on family composition; more children than ever before are now living with a single parent. In March 1970, nearly 9 of 10 children lived with both of their parents, but by March 1976, this ratio dropped to slightly more than 8 of 10, with black children far more likely than whites to be in single-parent families (44 versus 12 percent). Of the 14.5 million mothers working or seeking work in 1976, 2.9 million headed their own families.[2]

Whether in one- or two-parent families, the older the children, the more apt their mothers were to be in the labor force. Among all children in husband-wife families, 35 percent of preschoolers had working mothers compared with 46 percent of children 6 to 13 years old and 53 percent of children 14 to 17 years old. These proportions were substantially greater for children in families headed by women (table 2).

Socioeconomic characteristics

At every age level, a smaller proportion of white than black children in husband-wife families had working mothers. In families headed by women, however, white children were much more likely to have a working mother than black children (table 3). More detailed data available for the first time reveal that in 1976, 7.5 percent of all children under 18 years old were in families of Spanish origin. However, Spanish-origin mothers were somewhat less likely to be in the labor force than other mothers. Thus, 38 percent of the children in these fami-

Allyson Sherman Grossman is an economist in the Office of Current Employment Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Reprinted from June 1977
Monthly Labor Review

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Labor Statistics

lies had a working mother compared with 45 percent of the white children and 53 percent of the black children.

Regardless of race, ethnic origin, or family type, children whose mothers were in the labor force were in families with considerably higher income, on average, than were children whose mothers were not in the labor force. For all husband-wife families with children, median income in 1975 was $17,200 if the mother worked compared with $14,300 if she did not.[3]

White children, on average, were in families with higher income than were black children. Among white children with both parents present, median family income was about $17,600 if the mother was in the labor force and $14,800 if she was not. Corresponding medians among black families with children were about $14,500 and $8,900.

The economic benefits many mothers are able to provide their children by means of paid employment can represent a major share of their offsprings' support. In March 1976, 23 percent (14.3 million) of all children were in families in which the father was absent (9.4 million), unemployed (2.5 million), or not in the labor force (2.4 million). More than half of all black children were living in one of these situations as were nearly one-fifth of all white children. Over the year, the total number of children in these circumstances did not change, although the number whose fathers were unemployed declined while the number whose fathers were not in the labor force grew.

In each of the above circumstances, children were better off in terms of family income if their mothers were in the labor force. For such children, median family income in 1975 ranged from $11,400 when the father was unemployed to $10,600 when the father was out of the labor force and dropped to $7,100 when the family head was a working woman. When the mother was not in the labor force, corresponding medians were $9,500, $6,500, and $3,900.

Family size shrinking

From 1970 to 1976, the average number of children in families with children dropped from 2.29 to 2.05 for husband-wife families and from 2.29 to 2.03 for those headed by women. As in previous years, there were fewer children, on average, in families with working mothers than in those in which

Table 1. Children under 18 years old, by age, race, type of family, and labor force status of mother, March 1970, March 1975, March 1975 revised, and March 1976

[Numbers in thousands]

Item	Children under 18 years				Children under 6 years				Children 6 to 17 years			
	1970	1975	1975 revised	1976	1970	1975	1975 revised	1976	1970	1975	1975 revised	1976
Total children[1]	65,755	62,725	62,770	61,697	19,606	18,150	18,134	17,639	46,149	44,575	44,636	44,058
Mother in labor force	25,544	27,619	27,650	28,159	5,590	6,539	6,512	6,439	19,954	21,081	21,138	21,720
Mother not in labor force	39,550	34,213	34,332	32,828	13,923	11,481	11,532	11,120	25,627	22,732	22,800	21,708
Husband-wife families	58,399	52,611	52,813	51,586	17,920	15,687	15,732	15,332	40,479	36,924	37,081	36,255
Mother in labor force	21,982	22,595	22,637	22,868	4,947	5,439	5,431	5,380	17,035	17,155	17,206	17,488
Mother not in labor force	36,417	30,016	30,176	28,718	12,973	10,248	10,302	9,952	23,444	19,769	19,875	18,767
Families headed by women[2]	6,695	9,221	9,168	9,401	1,593	2,333	2,312	2,227	5,102	6,889	6,856	7,173
Mother in labor force	3,562	5,024	5,013	5,291	643	1,099	1,081	1,059	2,919	3,925	3,931	4,232
Mother not in labor force	3,133	4,197	4,155	4,110	950	1,234	1,230	1,168	2,183	2,963	2,925	2,942
Other families headed by men[2]	661	892	788	710	93	130	90	80	568	762	699	630
White children, total	56,903	53,601	53,605	52,447	16,940	15,550	15,503	15,016	39,963	38,050	38,102	37,431
Mother in labor force	21,194	22,962	22,922	23,367	4,459	5,322	5,266	5,192	16,735	17,640	17,656	18,175
Mother not in labor force	35,244	29,895	30,023	28,490	12,424	10,127	10,166	9,761	22,820	19,768	19,857	18,728
Husband-wife families	52,336	47,086	47,227	45,972	15,975	14,008	14,028	13,634	36,361	33,078	33,200	32,338
Mother in labor force	18,865	19,646	19,626	19,789	4,083	4,601	4,572	4,532	14,782	15,044	15,054	15,257
Mother not in labor force	33,471	27,441	27,602	26,183	11,892	9,407	9,456	9,102	21,579	18,034	18,146	17,081
Families headed by women[2]	4,102	5,770	5,717	5,885	965	1,440	1,404	1,320	3,194	4,330	4,313	4,565
Mother in labor force	2,329	3,316	3,296	3,579	376	720	694	660	1,953	2,596	2,602	2,918
Mother not in labor force	1,773	2,454	2,422	2,307	532	720	711	660	1,241	1,734	1,711	1,647
Other families headed by men[2]	465	744	661	590	57	102	71	62	408	642	590	527
Black children, total	8,054	8,093	8,106	8,098	2,381	2,276	2,289	2,215	5,673	5,817	5,816	5,883
Mother in labor force	4,015	4,160	4,209	4,270	1,031	1,101	1,119	1,102	2,984	3,059	3,090	3,169
Mother not in labor force	3,849	3,791	3,775	3,727	1,315	1,149	1,153	1,101	2,534	2,642	2,622	2,626
Husband-wife families	5,335	4,598	4,612	4,570	1,683	1,377	1,385	1,322	3,652	3,222	3,227	3,248
Mother in labor force	2,810	2,508	2,529	2,613	775	729	735	719	2,035	1,779	1,794	1,895
Mother not in labor force	2,525	2,090	2,083	1,956	908	647	650	603	1,617	1,443	1,433	1,353
Families headed by women[2]	2,529	3,353	3,373	3,427	663	873	888	880	1,866	2,480	2,485	2,547
Mother in labor force	1,205	1,652	1,680	1,657	256	371	384	383	949	1,281	1,296	1,274
Mother not in labor force	1,324	1,700	1,692	1,770	407	502	504	497	917	1,199	1,189	1,273
Other families headed by men[2]	190	142	122	102	35	26	17	13	155	116	105	88

[1] Children are defined as "own" children of the family head and include never married sons and daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children. Excluded are other related children such as grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins, and unrelated children.

[2] Widowed, divorced, separated, and never married family heads.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

the mother was not in the labor force.

The reduction in average family size is a direct reflection of the declining birth rate. In 1970, there were 18.2 births per 1,000 persons in the population and 87.9 births per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years of age, the prime childbearing ages. By 1975, these birth and fertility rates had dropped to the lowest levels ever recorded, 14.8 and 66.7, respectively,[4] and provisional statistics for the first 10 months of 1976 indicate that the birth rate had dropped further to 14.7 and the fertility rate to 65.7.[5]

Evidence from a recent study indicates that young wives today expect to have far fewer children than did their mothers and grandmothers and that birth expectations are related to a woman's labor force status.[6] In 1975, young women (18 to 24 years of age) reported the average number of births they expected to have during their lifetimes as about two (2.2 on average), compared with nearly three (2.9) for women the same ages in 1967. The percentage of women who expected to have no more than two children rose from 44 in 1967, to 64 in 1971, and 74 in 1975. Furthermore, mothers who work or look for work expect to bear fewer children. The following tabulation shows the average number of births and expected births per 1,000 wives in three age groups as of June 1975:[7]

	Births to date	*Additional births expected*	*Total births expected*
Wives age 18 to 24:			
In labor force	511	1,551	2,062
Not in labor force	1,205	1,099	2,304
Wives age 25 to 29:			
In labor force	1,225	829	2,054
Not in labor force	1,966	503	2,469
Wives age 30 to 39:			
In labor force	2,518	116	2,634
Not in labor force	2,889	112	3,000

Table 2. Children under 18 years old, by age, type of family, and employment status of parents, March 1976

[Numbers in thousands]

Item	Total	Under 6 years	Children 6 to 17 years		
			Total	6 to 13 years	14 to 17 years
Total children[1]	61,697	17,639	44,058	28,378	15,680
Mother in labor force	28,159	6,439	21,720	13,458	8,262
Employed	25,628	5,593	20,035	12,311	7,724
Unemployed	2,531	846	1,685	1,147	538
Mother not in labor force	32,828	11,120	21,708	14,637	7,071
Husband-wife families	51,586	15,332	36,255	23,389	12,865
Mother in labor force	22,868	5,380	17,488	10,719	6,769
Employed	21,049	4,746	16,303	9,916	6,387
Unemployed	1,819	634	1,185	802	383
Mother not in labor force	28,718	9,952	18,767	12,670	6,096
Father employed	45,576	13,419	32,156	20,753	11,403
Mother in labor force	20,412	4,736	15,676	9,590	6,086
Employed	18,956	4,230	14,726	8,943	5,783
Unemployed	1,457	507	950	647	303
Mother not in labor force	25,163	8,683	16,481	11,164	5,317
Father in Armed Forces	1,092	493	599	447	152
Mother in labor force	429	144	285	209	76
Employed	378	133	265	192	73
Unemployed	51	30	20	17	3
Mother not in labor force	663	349	314	238	75
Father unemployed	2,486	942	1,544	1,090	455
Mother in labor force	1,133	369	764	536	228
Employed	902	281	621	439	181
Unemployed	231	88	143	96	47
Mother not in labor force	1,353	573	781	554	227
Father not in labor force	2,433	478	1,955	1,099	856
Mother in labor force	894	130	763	384	379
Employed	813	121	692	342	350
Unemployed	81	10	71	42	29
Mother not in labor force	1,539	347	1,192	714	477
Families headed by women[2]	9,401	2,227	7,173	4,706	2,468
Mother in labor force	5,291	1,059	4,232	2,739	1,493
Employed	4,579	847	3,732	2,394	1,338
Unemployed	712	212	500	345	155
Mother not in labor force	4,110	1,168	2,942	1,967	975
Other families headed by men[2]	710	80	630	283	347

[1] See footnote 1, table 1.
[2] See footnote 2, table 1.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Table 3. Children under 18 years old and median family income in 1975, by age, type of family, labor force status of mother, race, and Spanish origin, March 1976

Item	Husband-wife families			Families headed by women[2]		
	White	Black	Spanish origin	White	Black	Spanish origin
	Numbers in thousands, March 1976					
Children under age 18[1]	45,972	4,570	3,670	5,885	3,427	921
Mother in labor force	19,789	2,613	1,429	3,579	1,657	347
Mother not in labor force	26,183	1,956	2,242	2,307	1,770	573
Children under age 6	13,634	1,322	1,323	1,320	880	261
Mother in labor force	4,532	719	451	660	383	76
Mother not in labor force	9,102	603	872	660	497	185
Children age 6 to 13	20,834	2,104	1,673	2,956	1,708	450
Mother in labor force	9,285	1,227	680	1,854	857	177
Mother not in labor force	11,549	876	993	1,102	851	274
Children age 14 to 17 years	11,504	1,144	675	1,610	838	209
Mother in labor force	5,971	667	298	1,065	417	94
Mother not in labor force	5,533	477	377	545	422	115
	Median family income, 1975					
Children under age 18[1]	$16,080	$11,873	$11,356	$5,967	$4,569	$4,730
Mother in labor force	17,588	14,461	13,686	7,778	5,752	6,049
Mother not in labor force	14,796	8,912	9,849	3,975	3,764	4,306
Children under age 6	13,678	11,056	9,957	4,014	3,914	3,941
Mother in labor force	14,477	13,323	11,806	5,340	4,946	4,787
Mother not in labor force	13,290	8,630	8,910	3,154	3,542	3,523
Children age 6 to 13	16,496	11,858	11,837	6,164	4,775	4,875
Mother in labor force	17,804	14,570	13,991	7,786	5,815	6,214
Mother not in labor force	15,268	8,917	10,399	4,111	3,915	4,529
Children age 14 to 17	18,623	13,131	13,213	7,873	4,949	5,677
Mother in labor force	19,779	15,781	16,073	9,478	6,426	6,904
Mother not in labor force	17,224	10,028	10,603	5,162	4,055	4,747

[1] See footnote 1, table 1.
[2] See footnote 2, table 1.

NOTE: Because of rounding, sums of individual items may not equal totals.

Child care

Although a substantial amount of data is available on the social and economic characteristics of children with mothers in the labor force, little is known about the current demand for and supply of child care services and facilities. Of the few recent child care studies undertaken,[8] a survey of daytime care of children 3 to 13 years old in October 1974 and February 1975[9] revealed that among children of women who were employed full time, 54 percent of older children (7 to 13 years old) compared with 41 percent of younger children (3 to 6 years old) were usually cared for by a parent when they were not in school.

If care by a parent was not feasible, other arrangements were made. Equal proportions (about 17 percent) of school age children either cared for themselves after school or were cared for in their own home by someone else. However, younger children were most often taken to someone else's home. Organized day care centers were used infrequently. Only 6 percent of the younger children and 1 percent of the older children were cared for in this type of setting.

Although the effects of increased availability of child care facilities on the labor force participation of mothers remain uncertain, newly enacted legislation may provide some impetus for mothers to join the work force. Under the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976,[10] parents who meet the established criteria will receive a tax credit of 20 percent of their child care expenses (to a limit of $400 for 1 child and $800 for 2 or more). Unlike previous years, no income limit is in effect. This change may provide an additional incentive for some women with young children to remain in or enter the labor force. □

FOOTNOTES

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, these findings are from the annual survey of marital and family characteristics of workers in the population 16 years old and over. The survey was conducted in March 1976 for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. For an analysis of previous data, see Elizabeth Waldman, "Children of working mothers, March 1974," *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1975, pp. 64-67. Additional tabular information on this subject will appear in a forthcoming Special Labor Force Report. Estimates based on a sample, such as those shown in the tables, may vary considerably from results obtained by a complete count in cases where the numbers shown are small. Therefore, differences between small numbers or percents based on them may not be significant. For more information, see Howard Hayghe, "Marital and family characteristics of workers, March 1975," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1975, pp. 52-56, reprinted with additional tabular data and an explanatory note as Special Labor Force Report 183.

Because of recently introduced refinements in the computer processing of the sample results, data for March 1976 are not strictly comparable to previously published data. In order to evaluate the overall impact of the new procedures on the marital and family data obtained from the Current Population Survey, the data from the March 1975 survey were processed again, using the new 1976 procedures. Thus, a "bridge year" comparison between results from the previous and revised procedures is provided (table 1).

[2] Data exclude a small number of subfamilies. A subfamily is a married couple with or without children, or one parent with one or more single children under age 18, living in a household and related to, but not including, the head of the household or his wife.

[3] Income is reported for 1975; labor force status is for March 1976.

[4] "Advance Report Final Natality Statistics, 1975," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, (HRA) 77-1120, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Health Statistics, December 1976.

[5] "Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths for October 1976," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*.

[6] *Fertility of American Women: June 1975*, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 301, Bureau of the Census, 1976.

[7] *Fertility of American Women*, p. 25.

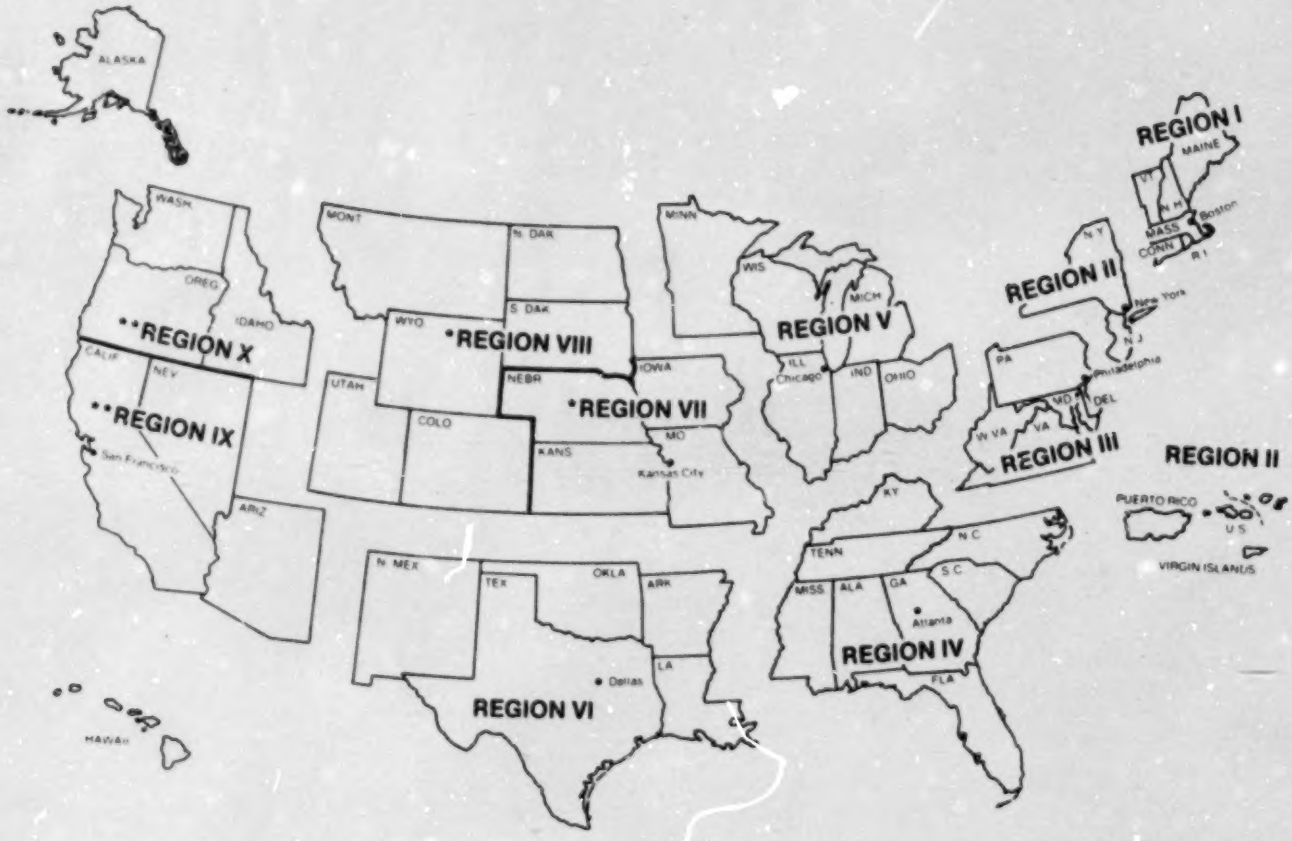
[8] Some current studies on child care are Jack Detmore and W. R. Prosser, *A Study of Day Care's Effect on the Labor Force Participation of Low Income Mothers* (Washington, D.C., Office of Economic Opportunity, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 1973); Sar Levitan and Karen Cleary Alderman, *Child Care and ABC's Too* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Richard L. Shortlidge, Jr., "Patterns of Childcare Utilization Among Women With Preschool Children," *Dual Careers*, Vol. 4, R & D Monograph 21 (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 1976), pp. 119-39, and *The Hypothetical Labor Market Response of Black and White Women to a National Program of Free Day Care*, unpublished.

[9] *Daytime Care of Children: October 1974 and February 1975*, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 298, Bureau of the Census, 1976.

[10] Public law 94-455.

• U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1977 261-008/124

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Regional Offices



Region I
1603 JFK Federal Building
Government Center
Boston, Mass. 02203
Phone: (617) 223-6761

Region II
Suite 3400
1515 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10036
Phone: (212) 399-5405

Region III
3535 Market Street
P.O. Box 13309
Philadelphia, Pa. 19101
Phone: (215) 596-1154

Region IV
1371 Peachtree Street, NE.
Atlanta, Ga. 30309
Phone: (404) 881-4418

Region V
9th Floor
Federal Office Building
230 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, Ill. 60604
Phone: (312) 353-1880

Region VI
Second Floor
555 Griffin Square Building
Dallas, Tex. 75202
Phone: (214) 749-3516

Regions VII and VIII*
911 Walnut Street
Kansas City, Mo. 64106
Phone: (816) 374-2481

Regions IX and X**
450 Golden Gate Avenue
Box 36017
San Francisco, Calif. 94102
Phone: (415) 556-4678

*Regions VII and VIII are serviced by Kansas City
**Regions IX and X are serviced by San Francisco